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THE IMPACT OF CURRICULUM CONTENT ON THE QUALITY OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE TRAINING IN SELECTED TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN THE WESTERN REGION, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The quality of training in the food and beverage sector significantly affects the quality of service delivery to customers in the hospitality industry. This study sought to investigate the factors that affect the quality of food and beverage training at selected technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the western region of Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to collect data from the participants. The participants were trainees and trainers of food and beverage courses at artisan, certificate and diploma levels. from the selected TVET institutions. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling were used to select respondents from each of the selected four TVET institutions. A total of 180 respondents, comprising 28 trainers and 152 trainees were sampled. The results showed that most trainers and trainees agreed that the TVET curriculum was relevant, current, had sufficient practical component, was deliverable within the stipulated time, and met industry needs and expectations. With mean scores of above 3.5 on Likert five-point scale. There was generally a high level of agreement among respondents on specific aspects of the curriculum. The study recommends that there is a need for TVET institutions to restructure their programmes to be more receptive to the dynamic needs of the industry so as to facilitate absorption and integration of graduates in the job market.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Kenya recognizes that TVET institutions significantly contribute to skilled human resource to meet the manpower needs of the economy. In this respect, the quality of training in the institutions and especially in the service industry such as hospitality eventually affects the overall performance of the industry. According to the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (2009, 2010a, 2010b), training in the tourism industry must be taken seriously as a major pillar for advancing the development of the industry and that trainees in TVET intuitions need to have skills that match the demands in the world of work. Relevant and quality training is one of the best ways

of preparing trainees to meet industry demands (Muiya & Kaane, 2014). The curriculum offered by the public TVET institutions is developed by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), which provides logistical support and also coordinates various subcommittees for curriculum development (KIE, 2006). In addition, several private TVET establishments offer externally based curricula (mostly British and American), particularly in courses where an internally designed curriculum is missing or is inadequate (Nyerere, 2009).

A large number of graduates from technical institutions are absorbed by the hospitality industry. The need for food and beverage training has become paramount in the tourism, leisure and hotel industries. Several studies have been carried out to determine the challenges faced by trainees and graduates of in the hospitality industry. For instance, Altbach and Salmi (2011) found that students who are trained in TVET institutions complain about not being able to 'fit' in the industry after graduation. Palmer (2005) attributes this feeling of inefficacy by trainees in the job market to inadequate preparation of the trainees in the TVET institutions. KIE notes that while foreign-based curricula are usually cost-effective, they are sometimes found to be of lower quality and often fails to meet Kenya-specific training needs (KIE, 2006). The lack of an all-inclusive national training structure to monitor the many TVET institutions has led to institutions teaching different syllabi that are influenced by the origin, industry demands and reputation of the examining body (Ngerechi, 2003). Although these and other studies have attempted to examine the challenges faced by trainees during training in TVET institutions and in the course of employment, very few studies, if any, have evaluated the impact of TVET curriculum content on the quality of training in these institutions. This study investigated the determinants of the quality of food and beverage training in selected TVET institutions in the western region of Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to collect data from the participants, who were trainees and trainers of food and beverage courses at artisan, certificate and diploma levels from the selected TVET institutions. A self-administered questionnaire was used in data collection. The study employed Yamane's formula (Israel, 1992) for determination of the sample size *n*, which is given by $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$, where *N* is the total target population and *e* is the margin of error (or level of significance). The target population was 327 and taking the margin of error to be 0.05 (for 95% level of confidence), the study sample size worked out to be 179.92 and hence 180 respondents. Of the 180 respondents, 27 were trainers and 153 were Food and Beverage trainees. For trainers, purposive sampling was used to select the four TVET institutions in Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga Counties that have offered Food and Beverage training for at least five years. The four institutions sampled were assigned labels: A, B, C and D respectively. Two of the institutions had each 5 Food and Beverage trainers, one had 4 trainers while another had 13 trainers. All the 27 trainers were selected to participate in the study.

For trainees, a combination of stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques was used to select trainees in each of the four TVET institutions. The trainees were divided into three groups (strata), each stratum a level of training: diploma, certificate or artisan level. From each stratum, a simple random sampling technique was used to select at least 50% of the trainees, using a sampling fraction of two. *Table 1* shows the distribution of the target population in the target population.

Table 1: Distribution of the Target Population

Target population category	Institutions				Total
	A	B	C	D	
F&B - artisan	13	12	14	16	55
F&B - Certificate	87	19	23	13	142
F&B - Diploma	53	16	23	11	103
F&B-trainers	13	5	4	5	27
Total	**166**	**52**	**64**	**45**	**327**

Data were collected using two different questionnaires, one designated for trainers and the other distinct for the food and beverage trainees. The trainers' questionnaire had two sections: Section A which dealt with demographic details and Section B which contained items related to the

training experience in Food and Beverage courses. The section explored challenges that affected training such as trainees' admission (entry behaviour), equipment, assessment processes, availability of trainers and industrial. Trainers were also requested to give recommendations on how best Food & Beverage training could be improved. The trainees' questionnaire investigated their views regarding the training, resources and equipment, trainers' competencies, duration of training and difficulties encountered during the training. The participants responded by rating each of the aspects on the Likert 5-point scale. Their recommendations were also sought based on what could be done to improve their training.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Trainers' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	8	38.1
Female	13	61.9
Total	**21**	**100.0**

From the data in *Table 2*, 8 trainers (38.1%) were male while 13 (61.9%) were female. The majority of sampled trainers were female probably because of simple random sampling in which gender wasn't a basis for selection.

Table 3: Age distribution of trainers

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25-30 years	3	14.3
31-35 years	5	23.8
36-40 years	6	28.6
Over 40 years	7	33.3
Total	**21**	**100.0**

The age distribution for trainers is summarized in *Table 3* above. From the results, majority of the trainers were aged over 30 years. This is mainly the age bracket composed of those who have recently completed tertiary and hence are eligible to teach in TVET institutions.

The results showed that 92.4% of the trainees agreed that the curriculum content covered important topics while only 3.8% disagreed with this aspect (see *Table 4*). These results indicated that trainees had a high level of satisfaction with the content being taught in the TVET curriculum. As to whether the content was sufficient for the time allocated, 62.9% agreed while 60.3% agreed that time allocated for practical sessions was enough. Considering that both these two aspects dealt with time allocated for curriculum coverage and that slightly over half of the trainees consider that the time was sufficient, the results suggested that TVET curriculum at various levels may require more time for the content to be covered adequately. This would offer more time for trainees to be exposed more to a greater variety of practical sessions. This is important considering the practical nature of TVET training.

Table 4: Trainees' Responses on the TVET Curriculum Content

Curriculum Content	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
The curriculum covers important topics	6 (3.8%)		6 (3.8%)	67 (42.1%)	80 (50.3%)
Content is enough given the time allocated	14 (8.8%)	12 (7.5%)	33 (20.8%)	75 (47.2%)	25 (15.7%)
Time allocated for practicals is enough	6 (3.8%)	6 (3.8%)	51 (32.1%)	57 (35.8%)	39 (24.5%)
Content relates to the industry requirements	26 (16.4%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (16.4%)	78 (49.1%)	29 (18.2%)
Content is up to date	22 (13.8%)	12 (7.5%)	17 (10.7%)	77 (48.4%)	31 (19.5%)

From the results, most trainees (67.3%) agreed that the TVET curriculum content was related to industry requirements. In relation to this, 67.9% of the trainees agreed that the curriculum content was up to date. These findings are important since the level of preparedness of trainees for and hence absorption in the job market is enhanced greatly when the curriculum learning outcomes merge the industry requirements. According to Wachira *et al.* (2006), the discrepancy of skills acquisition between the TVET institutions and the industry is a challenge that needs to be urgently addressed so as to realise positive results from the TVET graduates for economic progress. However, of all the items, these last two aspects on the relevance and accuracy of the curriculum attracted the highest number of trainees who strongly disagreed (16.4% and 13.8% respectively). This may lend credence to observation by Mwinzi and Kelemba (2009) that TVET graduates have been criticized for lack of the necessary technical skills for the labour market. Thus, although the TVET curriculum was good in imparting the necessary skills, there may need to realign it to better serve the interests of the industry.

Table 5: Trainers' Responses on the Various Aspects of the TVET Curriculum

Curriculum Content	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
Curriculum covers important topics	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (9.5%	11 (52.4%)	8 (38.1%)
Content is enough given the time allocated	0 (0.0%)	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	13 (61.9%)	2 (9.5%)
Time allocated for practicals is enough		3 (14.3%)	2 (9.5%)	10 (47.6%)	6 (28.6%)
The content relates to the industry requirements			1 (4.8%)	16 (76.2%)	4 (19.0%)
Content is up to date			8 (38.1%)	9 (42.9%)	4 (19.0%)

As shown in *Table 5* above, 90.5% of trainers agreed that the TVET curriculum covered important topics. In addition, 71.4% and 75.2% agreed respectively that the content was enough for the time allocated and that the time allocated for practical sessions was also enough. Further, 95.2% and 61.9% agreed that the curriculum was relevant and current respectively with regard to industry needs. According to Konayuma (2008), one major concern of policymakers is to ensure a TVET system that is relevant while addressing issues of quality. However, it is noteworthy that none of the trainers strongly disagreed with any of the items regarding curriculum content.

In general, most trainers were of the view that the TVET curriculum was relevant, current, had sufficient practical component, was deliverable within the stipulated time, and met industry needs and expectations.

Descriptive statistics were carried out on responses by trainees and trainers to the various aspects of the curriculum (see *Table 6*).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Curriculum Content

Aspects of Curriculum Content	n	Mean	Std. error	Std. Deviation
Curriculum content covers important topics	159	4.3522	0.06919	0.87249
Content is enough given the time allocated	159	3.5346	0.08868	1.1182
Time allocated for practicals in enough	159	3.7358	0.07903	0.99653
Content relates to the industry requirements	159	3.6918	0.07568	0.95434
Content is up to date	159	3.522	0.10128	1.27704

Mean scores of above 3.5 showed a high level of agreement among the respondents on the specific aspect of the curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This study has found that in general trainees and trainers in TVET institutions in the Western region of Kenya agreed that the TVET curriculum had important, relevant and up to date content which is responsive to industry needs. In addition, the time allocated for curriculum delivery was sufficient both to cover the curriculum and to offer sufficient practical sessions to boost the transfer of acquired skills and knowledge. However, based on some responses, there is still need for the government and TVET institutions to restructure the curriculum and programmes to be more aligned to the needs of the dynamics of the job market so as to improve absorption and integration of TVET graduates in the world of employment, including self-employment.

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